

**McKernan & Parkallen Communities Consultation on Flood Prevention
Held March 22, 2005 at McKernan Hall and on
April 11, 2005 at McKernan Elementary/Junior High School**

Consultation Summary

Attendance: 75 in total

Main presenter: Russell Barth, Senior Engineer & Flood Prevention Project Leader for Ward 5,
Drainage Services, City of Edmonton

Note: Bad weather on March 22 resulted in a second consultation being held on April 11. The same presentation was made at both meetings.

Presentation

Following introductions, Mr. Barth reviewed the drainage engineering findings for the two communities and discussed options for reducing the risk of flooding in the future. He noted that the findings show better flood prevention requires action on the part of both the City and homeowners. System improvements for McKernan and Parkallen under consideration by Drainage Services include:

- Constructing a new stormwater pipe from 114 Street and 72 Avenue that would lead to a new outfall at the North Saskatchewan River.
- Building a new partially combined sewer line north on 111 Street then east on 76 Avenue to divert sewage flow from both communities and relieve system pressure.
- Building a new partially combined sewer line south from 65 Avenue and 111 Street to 61 Avenue to divert sewage flows from both communities and relieve system pressure.
- Building a new partially combined sewer line from 110 Street to 111 Street in the lane north of 66 Avenue to balance flows in the system.
- Upgrading some selected storm and partially combined sanitary lines to remove bottlenecks and increase capacity.
- Sealing sanitary manhole covers to prevent rainwater from entering the sanitary sewer system.
- Subsidizing the installation of backwater valves in all homes in low lying areas.

The estimated cost of implementing these options is \$14.9 million. Other ideas initially thought of by Drainage Services but later rejected for a number of reasons included building two dry ponds, re-grading selected streets to improve surface drainage and building a sealed, underground sanitary storage tank.

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Homeowners were asked to improve their own on-site drainage as much as possible. Options include:

- Better lot grading to ensure surface water gets away from the house.
- Disconnecting roof drain downspouts from the underground system that drains to the partially combined sewers. This would allow roof runoff to flow along the surface to the street and into storm sewers not connected to basements.
- Repairing and maintaining good eavestroughs and downspouts.
- Having downspout extensions that channel water at least six feet away from the house. If an extension is not possible, to drain onto a splash pad.
- Installing and/or maintaining a backflow prevention valve.
- Installing, if appropriate for the situation, a sump pump.

Input from Residents

People at the meetings had many questions and comments about the presented options. They also sought advice and direction regarding flood prevention home improvements like lot grading and backwater valves.

Some residents wanted to know when the options would be implemented, how they would be paid for and what impact residents' input would have on final decisions. Drainage Services was encouraged to review other parts of the communities for drainage issues not referred to in the engineering findings or suggested options. Several specific examples were provided at the meetings:

- Pooling of water on 71 Avenue between 113 and 109 Streets.
- An elevated back lane between 71 and 72 Avenues at 112 Street.
- An elevated back lane at 65 Avenue and 111 Street.
- An elevated back lane north of 62 Avenue between 111 and 112 Streets.
- Snow and sand piled up by graders on snow routes that cause pooling of water on sidewalks.

While the presented options were generally supported, there was a concern that new combined sewer construction was being considered. A resident noted that this is contrary to drainage planning that calls for reducing or eliminating partially combined systems. Another person was concerned that there were few flood prevention system options presented for homes located outside of low lying areas.

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It was suggested Drainage Services investigate the movement of groundwater and consider ways to lower the water table, particularly under homes built on the old lakebed. One resident said this could be done by building deep-bore sewer pipes, as was done in Millwoods. Another suggested a large central pump be used.

One person questioned the location, size and shape of the dry pond proposed for Parkallen while another wondered how the dry pond would be emptied. In addition to dry ponds, it was suggested that the LRT right-of-way be re-graded to prevent stormwater from draining into McKernan and Parkallen from the University Farm property. Another person suggested the future LRT underpass at Belgravia Road be used as a collection area for stormwater.

The size of underground pipes was a concern for a few people. They questioned whether existing pipes could handle increased flows. There were also a few questions about how the work to eliminate interconnections between sanitary and stormwater pipes in the McKernan and Parkallen related to the flood prevention program.

One person questioned Drainage Services statistics regarding the number of homes that were flooded in the two communities. He suggested many more homes were flooded than those that were reported to the City.

Homeowner Options

Many at the meeting asked questions or raised issues regarding flood prevention home drainage options. Several people were unsure of sump pump, weeping tile, backwater valve or lot grading regulations, installation, maintenance, or operation. A few people mentioned that it would be difficult or expensive to re-grade their lots because streets and/or back lanes were too high.

Some residents asked whether subsidies for backwater valves and downspout disconnections were still available. It was recommended that both programs be continued.

Two people felt the City should allow weeping tile to be directly connected to the sanitary or stormwater system. They argued this would prevent water from simply recycling from a sump pump to the surface and back down again to weeping tile.

One person cautioned that installing a sump pump might be unwise without also providing an alternative source of power for the pump.

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Meeting participants supported a flood prevention education program for homeowners. One person suggested an education program be extended to building contractors. Another called on the City and provincial government do a better job of coordinating their relief and reimbursement programs so there is consistency and reduced confusion over who offers what to whom. One person suggested that homeowners be encouraged to plant more trees and grass to absorb more rainwater.

Next Steps

Input from the community and other stakeholders regarding system options will be incorporated into a more detailed implementation plan. This plan will be discussed with the community before being presented to City Council in the fall. Mr. Barth noted a number of funding options were being considered, including federal and provincial support. Implementation plan timing will depend on funding and the capacity to do the work. Community residents will be notified of the next consultation. Additional comments or questions may be forwarded to Mr. Barth at 496-5552 or russell.barth@edmonton.ca

Other Key Contacts

Call 496-5539 to be added to the flood prevention program mailing list or to receive future updates and notices by e-mail. Call the 24-hour drainage hotline at 496-1717 if there is a drainage or sewer problem on your property or on your street.

More information about drainage services and the flood prevention program is available at www.edmonton.ca/floodprevention